SOCIAL PLANNING

FOR A NEW

RESOURCE TOWN:

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE

NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL TASK FORCE

FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

FINAL REPORT

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SECTION I

PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES TO MINIMIZE IMPACTS OF THE CONSTRUCTION CAMP AND NEW TOWN ON FORT MCMURRAY SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERY

An additional statement of priorization is included after each recommendation and will be noted as: absolutely essential; or, important; or, good but optional.

A. RECREATION, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL:

1. FORT MCMURRAY -

a) Multi-purpose community recreation and social facilities should be developed in each area. Use of these facilities should be maximized by:

- hiring of directors to co-ordinate activities in each facility (coupled with volunteer workers);
- development of programs and schedules designed specifically by the residents to meet needs of all residents in the community served by the facility;
- integration of private and community group activities (e.g. clubs, societies, private enterprise, etc.) with facility schedules and programming.

This represents an absolutely essential situation. Plans for maximization were considered to be good but optional.

b) Outdoor recreational facilities should be developed in areas designated exclusively for that purpose (e.g. trails, active and passive parks, tennis courts, rinks, camping facilities, etc.).

This represents an important situation.

c) Neighbourhood pubs should be encouraged and developed.

This represents a good but optional situation.

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2. CONSTRUCTION CAMP -

a) Social, cultural and recreational facilities should be designed so that they can be easily incorporated into the new town when the construction phase is complete.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

b) Recreational needs of the construction camp population should be assessed and facilities developed to meet those needs.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

c) Camp activities should be programmed and scheduled by an in-camp Recreation Director.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

d) Action should be taken to alleviate problems related to prostitution at the camp (especially juvenile prostitution).

Prostitution will be a problem, not only in the construction camp, but also in Fort McMurray and the new town. Although this cannot be stopped, it can be limited. A particular concern is that of juvenile prostitution, and special attempts should be made to minimize this aspect in particular. Particular concentration on offences, such as contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and so forth, might help in this respect. This represents an absolutely essential situation.

3. REGIONAL -

a) Access to various lakes in the area should be provided and numerous camping facilities should be developed.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

b) Lake lots should be made available for the development of

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both commercial and non-commercial summer resorts and cottages. The problems in Fort McMurray from a lack of lots are well understood, and as a consequence, this represents an important situation.

TRANSPORTATION:

1. Highway 63 should be widened to four lanes and several developed camping/rest areas should be added adjacent to the highway.

2. A second highway should be built linking Fort McMurray to Lac La Biche to provide access to numerous recreation resorts as well as an alternate route out of Fort McMurray.

It is important that either one or the other of the above two proposals should be considered as absolutely essential. The argument was presented that people in remote localities need a higher level of services per capita than southern towns, so that communications will necessarily cost rather more. It was also pointed out that whilst development of the road system is necessarily expensive, it seems likely that as the region grows, this will have to take place, and there is no reason to suppose it will be any less expensive if the highway development is delayed. It was also felt to be an absolutely essential expectation that 63 should at least have developed shoulders for its entire length.

3. Construction employees should not be allowed to bring private vehicles on the construction site. In addition, transportation (i.e. air, bus, train) should be provided between the construction camp and major centres to discourage use of private vehicles by construction workers.

Construction employees should be discouraged from bringing in private vehicles onto the site, and that such discouragement is of important consideration; that there should be an alternative way for employees to get to the construction area is an absolutely essential situation. In some measure, this issue was related to the overall development plan for the region. If Edmonton is seen as the staging point for the

development, then some sort of cheap and rapid transportation from Edmonton, directly to the site is probably appropriate and necessary. Under these circumstances, Fort McMurray misses the adverse effects of this highly mobile population, but also misses the positive economic advantages of meeting their needs. If, alternatively, Fort McMurray is perceived as being the staging point, then the issue becomes one of deciding how people are to get from this town to the development area.

4. A public transit system designed to accommodate both handicapped and non-handicapped individuals should be established to link the new plant and town with existing plants and communities (incorporating present systems).

A public transit system of some kind is seen as absolutely essential. That it should be accessible as a whole to handicapped individuals is seen as good but optional, since all the evidence is that this population is vanishingly small in the newly developing town. It would seem to be more economic to have specialized transportation resources for those few handicapped individuals. The idea of an integrated development of transportation for the whole region was seen as one of the key themes of the whole plan and as having considerable importance. Whether or not the transportation needs to be rapid is questionable, although the advantages of rapid transit are that of encouraging greater use. However, the development of a specific transportation system is not in question here, rather than a coherent, well developed, overall plan.

C. ACCOMMODATION:

1. Work camp facilities should provide accommodation for families and childless couples as well as single men and women.

Accommodation should be supplied for family units of childless couples somewhere and that represents an absolutely essential situation. It was not seen as necessarily important that the accommodation be at the work camp.

2. Well-serviced and maintained holiday seasonal camp sites which are easily accessible must be provided for use by families of employees during summer months.

If this is to take place, then particular attention should be paid to public health hazards. This represents an important situation.

3. No subsidy should be provided for construction employees who live away from the camp site.

This represents an absolutely essential situation for single employees.

4. Future subdivision developments in both existing and new towns must contain a mix of housing with respect to all types of housing (i.e. single family vs high density) and ownership (i.e. company vs government vs private).

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

5. Squatting not to be a way of life in new or existing towns and should not be planned for. Support systems should be developed to provide alternative forms of housing for transients and in-migrants (i.e. Hostel and/or camping facilities).

Although squatting is undesirable, it is a fact of life we have to live with and give alternatives for squatters. Social Services and Community Health should take the lead in planning and investigating funding. This represents an absolutely essential situation.

6. If housing subsidies are to exist they must provide equal opportunity to all residents of the area regardless of employer, level of employee or type of occupation.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

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SOCIAL/HEALTH SERVICES:

1. Co-ordination and communication among existing public and private agencies must be improved.

This represents a good but optional situation.

2. Existing agencies must have adequate staffing and facilities in order to cope with present caseloads and to prepare for any future "boom".

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

3. Both new and existing agencies and industries should provide the Health and Social Services Task Force (or similar co-ordinating body) with regular, up-to-date population figures and social data (i.e. number of present staff, newly hired staff, anticipated staff increases and arrival dates, contracted companies and staff, etc.).

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

4. New agencies and/or directors for services in the new town must be orientated to existing agencies and communities in the area. This orientation should be co-ordinated through the existing Regional Task Force for Health and Social Services. New staff for agencies in both new and existing towns should be orientated in the closest established agency office.

This represents a good but optional situation.

5. Recruitment and hiring must involve a high degree of autonomy for new and existing "boom" communities. This must include:

   a) Intensive local advertising of all business and employment opportunities in the area;

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This represents a good but optional situation.

b) Realistic recruitment policies which portray a positive yet not overly-optomistic picture of the area;

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

c) The inclusion of appropriate community representatives on employment interview panels, and during the screening and selection of employees;

This represents a good but optional situation.

d) There should be included in all major industrial recruitment packages, an information brochure on available employment opportunities in the Health and Social Services field.

This represents a good but optional situation.

COMMUNICATION:

1. A central registrar of all employees (including sub-contractors) should be established for all existing and new plants (including pilot plants and testing sites) in order to provide vital information to Health and Social Service agencies during emergency situations.

Alsands should take responsibility for the co-ordination of this. This represents an absolutely essential situation.

2. Toll-free communication systems should be established between new towns and other "boom" communities in order to facilitate efficient transfer of necessary client information between agencies.

The Rite Line system could be used providing it is improved. There may be some scope for utilizing interactive computer terminals as more sections of the Social Services delivery systems have access to such resources.

This represents a good but optional situation.

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SECTION II

SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERY IN THE NEW TOWN

A. CO-ORDINATION OF SERVICES:

1. A central co-ordinating body for health, social, cultural recreational and educational services should be established in the new town prior to any physical development taking place.

It was not intended to imply that the co-ordinating council take the place of any municipal authority. It would rather fulfill the role of the current co-ordinating council, co-ordinating services, acting as an advocate, giving planning input and advice to the new municipality.
This represents an absolutely essential situation.

2. The existing Health and Social Services Task Force should function as an advisory body to social and health service planners in the new town during the interim development of the new town until a similar co-ordinating body (as outlined in Section 1 above) has been established in the new town. The existing Task Force will remain as an advisory body, where required, for the region.

This represents a good but optional situation.

3. Both the existing Regional Task Force and the new town co-ordinating body (as outlined in Section 1 above) will include representatives from industries in the region as well as from agencies concerned with Health, Social Services, Culture and Recreation, and Education.

This represents a good but optional situation.

4. Orientation programs for all new workers hired by agencies in both the new and existing towns should be conducted in the closest established agency office.

This represents a good but optional situation.

5. Residents of the new town must have input as early as possible into local and regional Health and Social Services planning, including facilities, programs and budgets.

This represents an important situation.

B. DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES:

1. Existing communities in the area will provide initial services to the new town until the town is able to provide its own.

The sense here was that of Social Services and nothing more than this.
This represents an absolutely essential situation.

2. A joint intake, information and referral centre should be established for services in the new town.

This represents an important situation.

3. An effective communication link must be established between government and industry with respect to Health and Social Services and exchanges of various types of information.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

4. Present service delivery systems which are unable to serve community needs adequately should be assessed and reorganized before they are implemented in the new town or continued in existing communities.

This assessment should be undertaken by the regional co-ordinator with assistance from the co-ordinating council.
This represents a good but optional situation.

5. Services should not be transplanted to the new town as is; alternate methods of service delivery should be considered as well (e.g. more flexible staffing arrangements, etc.).

This represents a good but optional situation.

C. RAPID GROWTH AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE:

1. Facilities must be designed and constructed in a manner that will facilitate expansion to meet increased population needs.

Competance in engineering issues are lacking, however, it is seen as important that space should be allowed for expansion.
This represents an absolutely essential situation.

2. Basic social and health services must be in the new town prior to the arrival of its residents.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

3. The government must be flexible in its programming and staffing of services, providing immediately available contingency funds which can be used by agencies to meet unexpected needs that occur as a result of rapid growth.

It is understood that the RFD system would be utilized quite frequently with hopefully a target of one month from suggestion to implementation. The RFD process could be used perhaps initially to set up a separate fund for development of the new town, which would then allow for a quick response time.
This represents an absolutely essential situation.

4. Population mobility must be recognized as a natural occurrence in boom-town situations, and therefore all planning of services must allow for this mobility (especially with respect to staff/population ratios, orientation programs for new staff, etc.).

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

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5. All services in the region should have as much autonomy as possible (i.e. local boards: control of funds, staff, facilities, programs and planning, etc.).

This represents a good but optional situation.

. INFRASTRUCTURE:

1. A rapid transit system should be established to link the new town and new plants with existing plants and communities.

As mentioned above, the rapidity of the transit system is seen as good but optional, rather than an absolutely mandatory situation. However, it is seen as highly important that an integrated transit system should be established. This represents an absolutely essential situation.

2. An internal public transit system must be established in the new town and this system should be linked to the transportation system serving area plants.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

3. Temporary accommodation for transients seeking employment must be developed in the new town and/or in adjacent communities.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

4. A community information and development centre for the new town must be developed immediately in an adjacent existing community and must be transferred to the new town as soon as the residents begin to arrive. This centre would perform a minimum of the following functions:
   a) Collection of socio-economic and population data on an on-going basis;
   b) Dissemination of information to individuals and groups within the community;

c) Facilitation of community activities, including identification and training of volunteers in the new town.

The collection and disemmination of data is seen as an absolutely essential situation. The actual system specified in this section is good but optional.

5. A yearly census must begin with the first residents of the new town, and should collect a range of social information as well as population statistics.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

6. The private sector should be encouraged to develop support services in the new town (e.g. centres for teens and seniors, day cares, welcome wagon, etc.).

This represents an important situation.

7. A standard incentive package (including housing) must be developed for <u>all</u> residents of the new town.

This represents an absolutely essential situation. It was generally felt that costs could be shared jointly by company and government since social advantages deriving from this accrue to both company and government. There was some bias towards having the financial input at the stage of land development, making housing initially cheaper and mechanisms such as subsidized mortgage or specialized tax rebate systems perhaps less necessary. However, if this approach were taken, it is evident that a housing authority would need to be set up to control private sector housing in order to avoid entrepreneurial misuse.

SECTION III

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DESIGN AND INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE NEW TOWN

A. BASIC ASSUMPTIONS:

The basic overriding assumption is that there must be an "orderly approach to growth". This means:

1. That facilities should be designed and their location be such that future expansion can be easily accommodated;

2. That the basic design of the town be flexible enough that future growth can be accommodated without changing the concept or philosophy behind the design;

(Assumptions 1. and 2. take into account the forecast that the new town will start with a 10,000 population and grow within the next 10 years to 50,000. This assumes that several tarsands plants will be developed in the near future.)

3. That the initial population be phased into the new town as slowly as possible (e.g. the town be populated in phases with at least 6 months separation between phases);

4. That each facility be designed in the most economic size relative to its use and built in stages if it is not feasible initially to complete the project.

In addition, the town should be designed and built in such a way that all facilities (including building, roadways, walkways, the transit system, etc.) are easily accessible to and useable by handicapped persons. This should include:

1. Enforcement of the "Building Standards for the Handicapped 1977" Supplement #5 to the national building code;

2. Provision of sidewalks and curbs that are accessible by wheelchairs (e.g. buggy ramps at intersections);

3. Requirement that all public buildings provide parking for the handicapped which is near the entrance of the building (parking space 14' wide allows use of lift vehicles).

All of the above stated represent an absolutely essential situation.

B. PHYSICAL LAYOUT OF THE TOWN:

Layout of the town should include the following:

1. A central downtown core that is capable of expansion as the town grows;

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

2. Separate subdivisions with populations between 3,000 and 5,000 developed around the downtown core;

This represents an important situation. This is only one way of organizing the town and might not necessarily be the best way.

3. A rapid transit system from the core to area plant sites and to communities linked on <u>one</u> internal transit system to provide efficient service between subdivisions, within subdivisions and between subdivisions and the core;

As mentioned above again, a transit system was seen as essential. Its rapidity or otherwise is of less importance. The nature of the system, whether it be road, rail or whatever, was not decided upon.

4. Streets which are laid out and identified in a simple fashion

which is easily understandable by all (i.e. numbered streets/ avenues concept - modified linear design);

This represents a good but optional situation.

5. An industrial corridor (truck route) with restricted access in order to prevent hazardous and heavy materials from entering residential areas (linked to air and rail terminals and to a central point in the downtown core);

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

6. Distinct divisions between residential subdivisions by means of thoroughfares and/or green space;

This represents an important situation.

7. A bypass-type highway from subdivisions to the core, between subdivisions, to other communities and to area plants without passing through residential areas.

This represents an important situation.

C. DOWNTOWN CORE:

The downtown core should include:

1. All major developments. Commercial activities should be designed according to needs of the subdivisions in which they are located;

This represents an important situation.

2. Central terminal for both the transit and the internal transit system and out-of-town rapid transit;

This represents an important situation.

3. Administration services for major businesses and resource-related companies;

This represents an important situation.

4. Terminal area of the truck route where all materials and supplies can be received for distribution through the core;

This represents an important situation.

5. A community-school centre which would initially house kindergarten to Grade 12 with the capability of being converted to a secondary school when the town becomes large enough to support additional schools;

This represents an important situation.

6. A major facility for each of:

   a) Emergency Services
   b) Social Services
   c) Primary Health Care
   d) Professional Health Clinic (privately owned).

   These facilities should be located as close together as possible with sufficient parking and good access for all residents. The Professional Centre and the Primary Health Care Facility (Hospital) should be joined by all-weather corridors. (see Section D. for description of these facilities.)

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

INTEGRATED SERVICES FACILITIES:

Each facility should include a central reception/intake/information area, manned by personnel who will be shared by those agencies/professionals who are housed in the building. These intake personnel will serve as information sources for community residents and will also

provide the first stage of the intake process where required. Administration of the facility will also be shared by its tenants.

a) Emergency Services:
Included in this facility will be headquarters for:
- police
- firefighters
- ambulance
- paramedics

b) Social Services:
Agencies sharing this facility should include a minimum of:
- Alberta Social Services
- Alberta Mental Health
- Services for the Handicapped
- Community Corrections
- Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
- Preventive Social Services
- Public Health Unit (although, by reason of its need for medical facilities, this agency may wish to locate adjacent to the hospital)

c) Primary Health Care:
This facility should consist of a Primary Care hospital (with a bedmatrix to suit the population demographics) on at least 10 acres of land to allow for the expansion which will be necessary to accommodate growth of the town. All necessary services (e.g. radiology, laboratory, etc.) should be provided by the hospital with only serious patients being transferred to larger centres.

d) Professional Centre:
This privately owned medical clinic should be joined to the hospital by means of an all-weather corridor to allow maximum

efficiency and safety for patient transfers. Also, it should provide facilities necessary for medical professionals (doctors, dentists, opthalmologists, etc.) to set up practice. An on-call system should be established to provide 24-hour medical and pharmaceutical services to the community. The clinic should also function as an out-patient station for the hospital so then only actual emergency cases are handled by the hospital's emergency department.

- This represents an absolutely essential situation.

E. COMMUNITY CENTRES:

Each subdivision should have a community centre which is easily accessible for all residents and available for both day and evening use. A large area of functional open space should be located adjacent to each centre to encourage outdoor family and community recreational acitivities. Each centre should be family-oriented and community responsibility for maintenance and operation of each centre should be encouraged. In order to obtain optimal and most economic use, community centres should be designed to be multi-use facilities which may include:

- elementary school (Kindergarten to Grade 9)
- non-profit community groups
- church
- day care
- recreation facilities for active and passive recreation
- sub-offices for interagency use - to provide an extension of services offered by agencies in emergency, social and health service facilities in the downtown core.

Staff in these centres should supply information to residents, schedule appointments between residents and agency/professional workers providing services, and co-ordinate acitivities in the centre. A close liaison

between Community Centre directors and those providing services in the community is necessary to produce effective and co-ordinated functioning within each centre.

This represents an important situation. This whole section relates fairly closely to the ultimate design of the town. This again is only one way of organizing the town.

F. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BANK:

A community development bank consisting of physical (land and/or structures), financial and human resources should be established in the new town. These resources would be made available to residents to encourage the development, operation and maintenance of facilities and services which would be acquired during the natural evolution of an established community (e.g. performing arts, athletic facilities, crisis and detox centres, exhibition/concert grounds, recreational vehicle storage, etc.).

Initial contributors to the Development Bank should include resource, support, and construction companies in the area as well as various levels of government. Additional contributors should be identified as the community expands. Contributors would be based on a pre-determined per capita resident worker basis. In addition, a user-pay system should be integrated into the Development Bank.

All lands and structures included in the Development Bank must be in addition to those reserve areas which are normally established during construction of a subdivision or community.

This represents a good but optional situation. It was felt that the impetus for the development of this idea should come from the planning group for the new town.

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G. POPULATION DENSITY AND HOUSING:

1. Dedicated reserve lands should be established that will accommodate both elementary school facilities and community recreation facilities and opportunities. Lands for junior and senior high schools should be planned, designated areas which are in addition to dedicated reserves.

This represents an important situation.

2. Subdivisions should offer a mix and choice of housing types and densities to the community. The available housing should offer prospective residents a choice of ownership or rental.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

3. Housing must be made available to allow the residents of the community to live in neighbourhoods of their choice rather than a location that is dependent upon with whom they are employed.

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

4. Reserve lands that are to be considered as dedicated lands must be of a functional shape and size to accommodate both structures and outdoor activities (i.e. walkways, bike paths, etc.) and be physically integrated to the residential areas.

This represents an important situation.

5. Housing (single family dwellings, town houses, apartments, etc.) should be designed to allow access by physically handicapped (at least 1 in every 750-1000 units of each type).

This represents an absolutely essential situation.

THE END.

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